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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 18th MEETING

Chairman:	Mr. SENGWE	(Zimbabwe)
later:	Mr. ALOM (Vice-Chairman)	(Bangladesh)
later:	Mr. SENGWE (Chairman)	(Zimbabwe)
later:	Mr. ALOM (Vice-Chairman)	(Bangladesh)
later:	Mr. SENGWE (Chairman)	(Zimbabwe)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 114: PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued) (A/51/6 and A/51/16 (Parts I and II))

Proposed medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001 (continued)

1. Mrs. INCERA (Costa Rica), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the General Assembly must decide on the structure of the medium-term plan, since, in its decision 50/452, it had authorized the Secretary-General to begin preparation of the plan without having provided specific guidelines on its structure. The medium-term plan, once approved, was the principal policy directive of the Organization and constituted the framework for the elaboration of the programme budget. Great care must therefore be taken in the exercise, particularly since the new, concise format was to respect all mandated activities, an aspect of particular validity at a time of economy measures.

2. Decisions on the structure and content of the programme framework must be precise vis-à-vis the forthcoming negotiations on the outline of the programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999; in that connection, she endorsed the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) (A/49/958, para.7) on the need to indicate the relationship between the programme framework and the budget outline. The exercise must be considered in the context of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 41/213, which attached great importance to improving the consultative process for the formulation of the medium-term plan, with a view to promoting intergovernmental analysis of the plan and its revisions. Accordingly, she wondered why the Secretariat had not made provision to enable all intergovernmental bodies, including the Main Committees, to decide on the programmes that fell within their competence. That would allow the Fifth Committee to focus on consideration of the administrative and budgetary aspects of the programmes and on the structure.

3. In view of the difficulties attending the current medium-term plan referred to by the Controller, consideration should be given to a new format. The Group of 77 and China were confident that the exercise could be concluded satisfactorily on the premise that the plan should be adjusted in accordance with General Assembly decisions.

4. She welcomed the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) at its thirty-sixth session. CPC should continue to strengthen its programmatic functions; that would enhance its capacity to formulate specific recommendations arising from legislative mandates. Such mandates should be strictly interpreted. CPC would be in a better position to fulfil its responsibilities if Secretariat proposals were more attuned to earlier decisions taken by Member States. In particular, the Secretariat should refrain from including in its proposals elements that were far removed from previous intergovernmental agreements and that appeared to prejudge the outcome of future negotiations.

5. With respect to the proposals now before the Committee, the Group of 77 and China agreed with CPC that the Perspective (A/51/6 (Perspective)) could not be part of the medium-term plan, but believed that the Note (A/51/6 (Note)) offered a sound basis for negotiation. They did not understand the rationale for some of the proposals and had difficulty with the programme framework. In particular, they considered that there should be a list of all legislative mandates for programmes and questioned the reasons for the elimination of a major group of subprogrammes. Information should be provided on current subprogrammes, and an explanation given for the elimination of subprogrammes. The Secretariat should also propose a level of priority among subprogrammes. The priorities indicated in the Note should include disarmament.

6. The Group of 77 and China reaffirmed that no programme could be changed without approval by the General Assembly and that the restructuring exercise could not affect existing programmes. Particular attention should be paid to cooperation and development problems in a new medium-term plan.

7. Mr. IRAGORRI (Colombia), speaking on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, said that the mandates authorized by Member States provided the only basis for the medium-term plan. The Non-Aligned Movement, however, considered that some aspects of the proposed medium-term plan failed to take those mandates into account. The strength of the Organization lay in each and every one of its objectives and there should be no discrimination between them. Those objectives could be attained only through compliance with the principles established in the Charter.

8. The Perspective not only failed to reflect the positions of Member States, but actually opposed them or ignored decisions taken by the General Assembly and CPC. It could not, therefore, serve as the basis for the Committee's deliberations; only the Note would allow consensus to be reached.

9. Subprogramme 1.3 (Disarmament) should constitute a separate programme, reflecting the various resolutions adopted by the General Assembly. It should be based on the principles and priorities adopted at the first special session on disarmament - in particular, the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. There was an obligation to conclude negotiations on nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict international control. To that end, the subprogramme should reflect the need for the Conference on Disarmament to establish an ad hoc committee. The complete elimination of other weapons of mass destruction must also be accorded priority. New ideas regarding the extension of the role of disarmament as a tool of preventive diplomacy and peace-building must be approached with caution, since such an approach might divert attention from the implementation of existing agreements. With regard to subprogramme 1.6 (General Assembly affairs), he fully supported the proposal submitted by the representative of Papua New Guinea on behalf of the Special Committee on decolonization.

10. The Non-Aligned Movement commended the efforts of CPC in reaching consensus on programme 2 (Peacekeeping operations), and endorsed the relevant conclusions and recommendations of that Committee.

11. Programme 19 (Human rights) was of particular importance. The Non-Aligned Movement had promoted the inclusion of a subprogramme on the right to development, as a follow-up to the Declaration on the Right to Development. It would, however, have preferred to have a separate subprogramme for the question, instead of having it included with research and analysis under subprogramme 19.1. In particular, it was important to know what percentage of resources would actually be dedicated to the right to development. With regard to paragraph 19.3, he said that subparagraph (b) should be redrafted to mention specific human rights organs. Moreover, subparagraph (j) contained an unacceptable generalization. While he recognized the need for coordination between peacekeeping operations and humanitarian assistance, those activities should be clearly differentiated. Peacekeeping operations could not be carried out on any basis other than a determination, under the Charter, that there was a threat to international peace and security.

12. Mr. Alom (Bangladesh), Vice-Chairman, took the chair.

13. Miss MONTAÑO-DURÁN (Bolivia), speaking on behalf also of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica (for the Central American countries), Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela as members of the Rio Group, said that programme planning was not an abstract or academic exercise, but an imperative for both the Secretariat and Member States The medium-term plan was intended to express legislative mandates, from which its objectives and strategies must derive. It was extremely important because, once adopted, the medium-term plan constituted the Organization's principal policy directive, serving as a framework for the programme budget, and represented a powerful tool for Member States to ensure the implementation of the decisions of legislative bodies.

14. The structure of the proposed medium-term plan followed the prototype suggested by the Secretary-General, on which the General Assembly had yet to take a decision. That omission should be made good. The new plan should cover a four-year period, so as to embrace two programme budgets, and should consist of an introduction and a programme-based element.

15. The Rio Group endorsed the views of the Advisory Committee on the prototype, as contained in document A/49/958, in particular paragraph 6 thereof. In particular, the Group emphasized the importance of congruence between the programme framework and organizational lines and of recognizing that the structure of the medium-term plan emanated from legislative mandates. The Advisory Committee had also pointed out that, under regulation 3.6 of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation, the medium-term plan was to be presented by programme and objective, and not by organizational unit. Should the new structure for the medium-term plan be adopted, the respective regulations would need to be updated.

16. She noted with appreciation that CPC had achieved consensus on the programme narratives for 21 of the 25 programmes and that partial agreement had been reached on two others; there were thus only two programmes on which no agreement had been reached. Such results were possible only when there was genuine political will on the part of Member States.

17. The Rio Group agreed with CPC that the Perspective could not form an integral part of the medium-term plan. The Note, however, faithfully reflected the consensus reached by Member States. In terms of substance, the Perspective did not reflect legislative decisions or provide a balanced view of the interests of all Member States or of the concerns of developing countries. In terms of format, it did not accord with the directives established by CPC, in particular, the indication of priority areas. The Rio Group welcomed the decision to submit programmes to the Main Committees, and awaited the views of those organs with interest. They were perfectly competent to determine political relevance and to guarantee that legislative mandates had been adequately reflected in the narrative to the plan.

18. The Rio Group could not accept a medium-term plan in which economic and social development activities were of secondary importance. Economic and social development were at the forefront of the concerns of the Rio Group countries and should be reflected in the activities of the Organization. The Group regarded the work of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and of the regional economic commissions as being of the greatest importance. In particular, they wanted the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean to remain a centre of excellence, collaborating with Governments in the development process, and in the formulation of follow-up to and evaluation of public policy and the provision of technical assistance. It fully supported the work of the United Nations in the promotion and protection of human rights and commended the work of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, whose work had enhanced the capacity of the United Nations to face the major challenges in that field, particularly in the wake of the World Conference on Human Rights which had declared human rights to be universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated.

19. The Rio Group attached particular importance to disarmament in all its forms, as confirmed in the Treaty of Tlatelolco, and considered that disarmament questions should be dealt with as a separate issue in the medium-term plan. The Group placed great value on the work of the United Nations in the field of decolonization and considered that the medium-term plan should reflect the continuing role of the Organization in that field. In that connection, she expressed concern that certain subprogrammes were to be eliminated in the forthcoming budget; that might be interpreted as a lack of interest in issues that were of vital importance to the United Nations.

20. One of the main advantages of the Note on the proposed medium-term plan (A/51/6 (Note)) as compared with the Perspective (A/51/6 (Perspective)) was that it listed the priorities for the forthcoming medium-term plan. The Rio Group agreed with the priorities set forth in paragraph 61 of the Note, but considered that the question of disarmament, in all its forms, particularly nuclear disarmament, should be added to those priorities.

21. Mr. GAIKWAD (India) said that his delegation fully associated itself with the statement made by the representative of Costa Rica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

22. His delegation welcomed the Note on the medium-term plan submitted by the Secretary-General (A/51/6 (Note)) and was prepared to negotiate on the basis of

that text with a view to reaching agreement on an introduction to the medium-term plan that would enjoy consensus.

23. Some of the programmes that would comprise the new medium-term plan had already been discussed in detail, and a substantial measure of agreement had been reached on some of them, in the Committee for Programme and Coordination. It was important that the programmes in the medium-term plan should reflect the mandated activities of the United Nations and specify concisely how the Secretariat visualized the attainment of those objectives. In a number of programmes, such as programme 1, the narrative presented by the Secretary-General went beyond the scope of intergovernmental agreements, as was the case, for example, on issues relating to preventive diplomacy and post-conflict peace-building and on the coordinating role of the Department of Political Affairs.

24. His delegation considered that disarmament should be reflected as a separate and distinct programme in the plan. The priority was global disarmament leading to the elimination of nuclear weapons. The medium-term plan should also reflect the need to implement and strengthen disarmament treaties relating to other weapons of mass destruction and the important issues of conventional disarmament.

25. On programmes relating to economic and social development, including programme 6 (Africa: New Agenda for Development), the recommendations of CPC should be endorsed. His delegation also called on the Member States to give their fullest support to programme 9 (Trade and development). His delegation welcomed the efforts of the Secretary-General of UNCTAD to rationalize and streamline the structure and budget of the Organization. The abolition of the separate Division on Least Developed Countries in the UNCTAD secretariat did not imply that less importance was attached to the problems of the least developed countries, small island States or landlocked countries and should not mean the abolition of special programmes or subprogrammes for them. His delegation therefore urged the Member States to accept the UNCTAD programme as recently approved in Geneva.

26. On programme 19 (Human rights), his delegation welcomed the recent assurances given by the High Commissioner for Human Rights that the right to development would receive high priority in the forthcoming medium-term plan. The concerns of his delegation on some areas of the programme which it considered to be not entirely in line with the provisions of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action had already been expressed by the representative of Colombia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement during the discussions in the Third Committee the previous week. His delegation intended to work with other delegations to see how its concerns could be addressed to enable the programme to be adopted by consensus.

27. In conclusion, he said that, in the view of his delegation, all the recommendations of CPC on document A/51/6 (Perspective)) and the programme narratives should be endorsed. His delegation would work with others to reach agreement on the remaining programme narratives.

28. Mr. SHIN (Republic of Korea) associated his delegation with the statement made by the representative of Costa Rica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

His delegation had some reservations about the structure and substance of the Perspective (A/51/6 (Perspective)) and was prepared to engage in discussions on the medium-term plan submitted by the Secretary-General on the basis of the Note (A/51/6 (Note)). In the view of his delegation, the Perspective failed effectively to address the concerns identified by CPC which had recommended, at its thirty-fourth session, that it should include an analysis of persistent problems and challenges, as well as emerging trends, and that it should indicate broad priority areas for the work of the Organization.

29. At the same time, his delegation questioned the Secretary-General's views on the role of the United Nations at a time of great uncertainty and rapid change. It did not consider that the four concepts of globalization, fragmentation, democratization and marginalization, which the Secretary-General had identified as the primary factors by which to define the operations of the United Nations, were entirely appropriate. It shared the view that the Perspective must be based on the consensus opinion of Member States.

30. His delegation endorsed the Note believing that, in both form and substance, it reflected the concerns of the majority of Member States and took into account the guidelines provided by CPC in giving a balanced picture of persistent problems and emerging trends. Member States should therefore begin negotiations on the basis of that document with a view to making it an integral part of the medium-term plan. It would, however, require some amendment and modification.

31. In general, his delegation was satisfied with the priorities identified in the Note, but agreed with other delegations that both the disarmament issue and the question of effective and coordinated response to global issues such as drugs, crime and the environment, should also be considered as potential priority areas.

32. While CPC had failed to make specific recommendations concerning the introductory part of the medium-term plan, it had contributed substantially to the deliberations of the Fifth Committee. Every effort should be made, on the basis of the documents currently available and with the support of the Secretariat, to reach agreement and to adopt a new medium-term plan by the end of the current session. His delegation looked forward to being an active participant in that joint endeavour.

33. Mr. Sengwe (Zimbabwe) resumed the Chair.

34. Mr. FATTAH (Egypt) said that the views expressed by the representative of Costa Rica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China fully reflected the position of his country.

35. As the proposed medium-term plan under discussion was the first such document to be considered in the circumstances of the new world order, it was highly important that the Member States should reach agreement as to what they wanted and expected from the United Nations in the coming years. The majority of the Member States wanted the Organization to give effect to the principles that had prompted them to join the United Nations, as reaffirmed by the Heads of State at the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, namely international

security and peace based on an effective system of collective security, on economic and social development, on justice and on the sovereign equality of States.

36. His delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's response to the views of the majority of Member States concerning the Perspective (A/51/6 (Perspective)) and considered the Note that had subsequently been submitted (A/51/6 (Note)) to be a sound basis for negotiation on the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001.

37. There was a need to define the institutional link between the general framework of the medium-term plan and the outline for the programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999 so that the Member States could satisfy themselves that the outline faithfully reflected the objectives of the medium-term plan. His delegation fully endorsed what was stated in that connection in paragraph 7 of the report of ACABQ (A/49/958).

38. Before the programmes comprising the medium-term plan, in particular those related to development, were discussed, his delegation wished to express concern at the growing trend to retreat from the obligations and undertakings that had been agreed on, over the previous five years, at a series of international conferences. Those important meetings had produced work programmes designed to enhance the value of collective efforts and to put development once more at the forefront of international priorities, in particular economic and social development in Africa. His delegation called on all parties to display the necessary flexibility and willingness to abide by what had been negotiated with a view to the adoption of a clear medium-term plan and programmes with specific objectives, rather than to try to exploit what was termed the "reform" of the United Nations in order to reduce its capabilities.

39. In conclusion, he said that his delegation was confident that the medium-term plan and the programmes to be adopted would faithfully reflect the principles of the Charter and the wishes of the majority of Member States, and thereby preserve the credibility of the Organization.

40. Mr. IVANOV (Bulgaria) said that his delegation shared the position of the European Union as expressed by the representative of Ireland at an earlier meeting.

41. His delegation regarded the Note (A/51/6 (Note)) as a satisfactory starting point for building a consensus among all groups of Member States on the crucial stage of priority-setting for the next two bienniums. The interaction between CPC and the Member States, on the one hand, and the Secretariat, on the other, had produced a document that was more concise, better structured and more action-oriented than its predecessor. His delegation felt that the new format of the medium-term plan, which related programmes and subprogrammes to specific departments and divisions of the Secretariat, would provide a good test of the evolving new management structure and culture of the United Nations.

42. His delegation was pleased to note that the promotion of sustained economic growth was to be accorded the necessary priority on a par with the maintenance of international peace and security. It therefore welcomed the set of measures

outlined in subprogramme 5.4 (Sustainable development) which was intended to develop a comprehensive framework for the more effective integration of the social, economic and environmental aspects of sustainable development embracing the relevant sectoral and cross-sectoral components of Agenda 21 and incorporating the results of other major United Nations conferences held in recent years.

43. As a follow-up to that subprogramme, he wished to highlight the importance of subprogrammes 10.4 (Handling globalization and the environment) and 10.5 (Global and regional servicing and support). In that connection, his delegation felt that the capacities of the Secretariat and of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for economic and social information gathering and policy analysis should be strengthened and be more focused on the delivery of quality products to Member States.

44. His delegation shared the belief that the programme resource requirements for operational activities for development should be granted due priority and supported the idea that the system resources previously allocated to outdated and low priority programmes should be reallocated to economic development with an emphasis on realistic project evaluation, strict performance compliance and strengthened oversight and investigation capabilities to preempt fraud and the mismanagement of the dwindling resources of the Organization.

45. Mr. MOSQUERA (Cuba) said that his delegation associated itself fully with the statement made by the representative of Costa Rica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and looked forward to hearing the replies which the Secretariat had been asked to provide to the requests that had been made.

46. Previous speakers had referred to the importance of the process of planning, programming, budgeting and evaluation. It was impossible to make an objective analysis of the new medium-term plan without bearing in mind, for example, the impact of the decisions taken on the programme budget for the forthcoming biennium. It was impossible to consider the proposed programme budget without knowing to what extent it reflected the outcome of departmental self-evaluation and programme evaluations. It was, moreover, not clear how the implementation of programmes was to be monitored to ensure that they fulfilled the objectives set.

47. In its resolution 41/213, the General Assembly had focused priority attention on the planning, programming and budgeting process and had decided to strengthen the mandate of CPC in that area. His delegation considered that the effective functioning of CPC was of the greatest importance and that its failure to reach agreement on certain programmes was due not to its own shortcomings but to the fact that some of its members had tried to force through decisions which were incompatible with the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation, under which the medium-term plan should be the programmatic reflection of legislative mandates.

48. The fact that one group of proposals by the Secretariat was incompatible with the letter and spirit of the mandates which had given rise to them was an additional cause of the difficulties and apparent ineffectualness of CPC. His

delegation could not subscribe to criticisms of CPC which took no account of the context of the negotiations and of the fact that the consensus mechanisms had not worked. The implementation of a new medium-term plan should include a strengthening of certain functions of CPC, including those of evaluation. In that connection, his delegation wished CPC to submit specific proposals to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session concerning measures to strengthen its evaluation functions.

49. His delegation also wished the Secretariat, during the current session, to propose an evaluation timetable, as provided for in regulation 6.2 of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation. Any departure from the Regulations should be fully explained to the General Assembly. The Joint Inspection Unit, in accordance with its mandate, should also submit a proposal on ways of improving programme evaluation and on the areas to be covered; that should be done in coordination with the Office of Internal Oversight Services in order to avoid duplication of efforts and resources.

50. As the representative of Costa Rica had said on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, it was necessary for the General Assembly at its current session to reach a specific decision on the new format of the medium-term plan. His own delegation was not convinced of the real advantages of relating programmes to the structure of the Secretariat. That approach seemed to be guided more by corporate than political considerations and might not fully ensure that effect was given to the objectives on which the General Assembly had decided. The identification of Secretariat structures with specific programmes raised other difficulties since some programmes were the responsibility of more than one department. It was essential that the Secretariat should spell out the possible advantages of that approach, bearing in mind the overriding importance of fulfilling the objectives and priorities of the Member States.

51. His delegation also had serious difficulties with the proposed structure of the programmes and regretted that, as had been stated on behalf of the Group of 77, the Secretariat had overlooked the concerns of Member States in that connection. His delegation proposed that disarmament should be an independent programme and requested the Secretariat to submit a document on that matter. Decolonization, too, should be a separate programme, and programmes 24 and 25 might be merged into a single programme covering all administrative services. At a time when the task of decolonization was only half completed, it was difficult to understand how that subject could be omitted from the medium-term plan. The Special Committee on decolonization and the Non-Aligned Movement had make specific proposals on the matter which ought to be approved without delay.

52. Further clarification was needed on the structure of the subprogrammes; it was difficult to understand why a number of important subprogrammes had been omitted including some which had been mandated by General Assembly resolutions. It was also surprising that the proposal contained no indication of priorities at the subprogramme level, in clear violation of rule 3.17 of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning. The Secretariat should therefore indicate to delegations the proposed subprogramme priorities before the submission of the corresponding programme.

53. His delegation welcomed the Secretariat's efforts to increase consultations on the proposed medium-term plan. However, it regretted the absence of any arrangements for the proposed plan to be considered by the principal organs of the General Assembly. In that connection, it would be interesting to know why no proposal had been made for the agenda item on programme planning to be considered also by the other Main Committees. The lack of guidance from the Secretariat and the policy positions adopted by certain countries prevented the Main Committees from taking decisions on the matter, in violation of the provisions of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning and of section II, paragraph 3(d), of General Assembly resolution 41/213. Any resolution adopted by the Committee should contain specific guidelines for the item's future consideration by the Main Committees.

54. His delegation took note of the priorities indicated by the Secretariat and supported the proposal of the Group of 77 and China that disarmament in all its aspects should also be a priority. It had certain reservations, however, about whether to accord the same priority to emergency humanitarian assistance because of its ad hoc and changing nature.

55. In conclusion, he said that his delegation was of the view that, despite the current budgetary constraints, the Secretariat should provide the personnel resources necessary for the proper implementation of programmes.

56. Mr. SELLASSIE (Ethiopia) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement made by the representative of Costa Rica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001 was an essential management tool for the work of the United Nations and a useful framework for the preparation of the programme budgets for the bienniums 1998-1999 and 2000-2001. Given its limited resources, the United Nations must identify its priority objectives and set corresponding targets to be achieved within available resources. To that end, the objectives and targets should be more focused and, where possible, quantified.

57. His delegation welcomed the balanced analysis contained in those sections of the proposed medium-term plan which dealt with persistent problems, emerging trends, challenges, the role of the Organization, the directions to be pursued and priorities. The fact that development issues were given top priority in the area of international cooperation reflected the common understanding that peace and security could not be achieved without sustainable development.

58. On the other hand, his delegation supported the view expressed by some members of CPC that the Perspective (A/51/6 (Perspective)) failed to address the concerns of the developing countries in that it omitted a number of important issues. A document of that nature should stress the development challenges facing the world community, especially the poorest nations, and emphasize the Organization's role in economic and social development. In its current form, therefore, the Perspective should not be part of the medium-term plan.

59. He wished, finally, to underscore the need to involve the Main Committees of the General Assembly, particularly the Second and Third Committees, in the preparation of the medium-term plan.

60. Mr. DEINEKO (Russian Federation) welcomed the new format of the proposed medium-term plan, which had been developed with the participation of Member States and on the basis of the recommendations of CPC and ACABQ. He noted with satisfaction the closer relationship between programmes and the organizational structure of the Secretariat; that should improve accountability and responsibility for the implementation of mandated activities and provide for more results-oriented actions.

61. The Perspective should be a concise document based on specific priorities agreed upon by Member States for the period of the medium-term plan and the plan itself should provide a more detailed description of the programme elements of those priorities and of the actions to be taken at all levels to implement them. Only under those conditions could the medium-term plan serve as a solid foundation for the preparation of the budget.

62. At the same time, however, the Perspective should not just be a listing of the ideas and priorities agreed upon by Member States. The Secretary-General should also have the opportunity to present his vision of those ideas. The Perspective document before the Committee (A/51/6 (Perspective)) was based on four global trends which, in the Secretary-General's view, would influence the world's development in the next millennium: globalization, fragmentation, democratization and marginalization. The Secretary-General had only been partially successful, however, in achieving his goal of setting out the pivotal elements of the Organization's activities and the perspectives agreed upon by Member States. In future, a less academic and more coherent and practical approach should be adopted.

63. As for the ideas contained in the Perspective, his delegation agreed with the need for coordinated multilateral efforts to find adequate responses to modern global challenges, In its principal activity, namely, peacekeeping, the Organization should give more room to multidimensional peacekeeping operations, with special emphasis on their political and humanitarian components. Mandates should be realistic and adequate resources should be provided for their implementation. At the same time, active United Nations involvement in the settlement of conflicts which were not yet ripe for mediation or resolution might compromise the Organization's peacemaking role.

64. In the social and economic fields, his delegation shared the ideas concerning the importance of sustainable development and the strengthening of public institutions and democracy. It noted, however, that the Perspective paid no attention to specific ideas for further reform of the United Nations covering both intergovernmental structures and programme coordination mechanisms.

65. The Perspective, moreover, offered no conceptual vision for the systemic development of international law and failed to elaborate on the important issue of creating effective instruments for putting into effect the rules of international humanitarian law in times of armed conflict. His delegation would also have preferred to see the problems relating to anti-terrorism and the control of the illegal arms trade presented in greater detail. In its current form, therefore, the Perspective was hardly a strategic and effective instrument for the preparation of the budget.

66. On the other hand, the Secretary-General's Note (A/51/6 (Note)) was a concise, coherent and priority-targeted strategic document which his delegation was prepared to accept as a basis for agreement by Member States. The Note, however, hardly touched upon the problem of the large group of countries currently undergoing the transition to democracy and crucial economic transformations. Their problems were mentioned only marginally; that was incorrect and politically short-sighted.

67. Mr. ZHANG Wanhai (China) said that, while his delegation agreed in principle with the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report of CPC on its thirty-sixth session (A/51/16 (Parts I and II)), it took note of the fact that CPC had been unable to achieve consensus on a number of issues. His delegation supported the statement made by the representative of Costa Rica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and wished to reiterate its position on the following questions.

68. First, the medium-term plan should reflect the focus and priorities of the work of the United Nations for the years to come, and should be acceptable to the majority of Member States. It should serve as the principal policy directive of the United Nations. Although his delegation respected the views expressed by the Secretary-General in the Perspective (A/51/6 (Perspective)) regarding globalization, fragmentation, democratization and decentralization, it could not fully subscribe to his analysis of those concepts and felt that they did not sum up adequately the major global trends. Given the serious flaws in the Perspective, it was natural that it should have been rejected. His delegation welcomed the strict observance in the Note (A/51/6 (Note)) of the format that CPC had recommended at its thirty-fourth session, namely the discussion in distinct sections of persistent problems, emerging trends, the challenges to be faced by the international community, the role of the Organization and the directions to be pursued. Like the majority of delegations, his delegation supported the inclusion of the Note in the medium-term plan in place of the Perspective which had been submitted earlier.

69. Second, no programme could be changed without the authorization of the General Assembly. The Secretary-General's recommendations could only serve as a basis for discussion, not as a basis for the Secretariat or its departments to propose changes.

70. Third, the provisions of General Assembly resolution 41/213 regarding the procedures for the formulation of the medium-term plan should be respected and effectively implemented. To downgrade the role of CPC in planning, programming and budgeting activities, or to call for its outright abolishment as some delegations had done, contravened the spirit of that resolution and was unacceptable to his delegation.

71. Mr. Alom (Bangladesh), Vice-Chairman, resumed the Chair.

72. Mr. ATIYANTO (Indonesia) said that his delegation associated itself with the positions of the Group of 77 and China and the Non-Aligned Movement, as expressed in the statement made by the representatives of Costa Rica and Colombia. His Government had always considered the medium-term plan to be extremely important as it constituted the principal policy directive of the

United Nations and provided the framework for the biennial programme budgets. Noting that CPC had considered the Note by the Secretary-General (A/51/6 (Note)) to be consistent with the format it had recommended for outlining the broad areas of priority for the period of the medium-term plan, he said that his delegation endorsed the proposal that the Note should be considered for inclusion in the first part of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001.

73. His delegation understood that the priorities set out by the Secretary-General in the Note reflected an integrated approach towards the linkage between peace and development. The medium-term plan for the years 1998-2001 should be designed to enable the United Nations to respond to the emerging trends and challenges of the twenty-first century. In that context, the issue of development was extremely important, especially for the developing countries, and it was therefore right that the plan should focus on development issues.

74. Since the major problems of development were global in scope, his Government believed that they could only be dealt with effectively through constructive dialogue for the promotion of international cooperation for development. Such a dialogue should be based on the imperatives of mutual interests and benefits, shared responsibilities and genuine interdependence.

75. His delegation reaffirmed its strong confidence in the capability of CPC to discharge its vital role as the main subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly for planning, programming and coordination. The function of CPC in reviewing the programmes of the Organization as defined in the medium-term plan had become even more indispensable.

76. Mr. REPASCH (United States of America) welcomed the new and streamlined format of the proposed medium-term plan. For it to be effective, however, three requirements must be met: it should clearly establish priorities among programmes and activities; it should provide clear programme objectives directly tied to performance indicators; and it should be clearly linked to the programme budget.

77. Regrettably, the proposed plan met none of those basic criteria. Both the Perspective and the Note contained far too many priority objectives and proposed activities to serve as useful, realistic tools for guiding the work of the United Nations in the years ahead. While his delegation accepted the Perspective for what it was, namely, the Secretary-General's views on the future role of the United Nations, it did not accept the Note as an integral part of the proposed medium-term plan. A plan which gave no indication of programme priorities was, in fact, not a plan at all and could not provide a basis for the strategic decision-making which every organization, especially the United Nations, must undertake. Programme descriptions which did not describe what was expected in terms of outcomes made it impossible for Member States to determine whether objectives had been achieved and whether legislative mandates continued to be valid. The deficiencies of the proposed medium-term plan in those areas culminated in a lack of linkage with the reality of available resources, as reflected in the budget. While the Organization might understandably wish to solve the world's problems, it must operate within a finite set of resources.

78. He did not propose to repeat the views which his delegation had already expressed in the discussions on the medium-term plan in CPC. His delegation had some serious reservations about aspects of some programmes and continued to believe that the programme descriptions did not provide a clear indication of priorities, but it would nevertheless urge members of the Committee to consider seriously the consensus agreements reached in CPC as the bases for agreements in the Fifth Committee.

79. His delegation opposed the proposal made by some delegations that programmes 24 and 25 should be merged; that would repudiate and contradict the mandate given by the General Assembly for the establishment of internal oversight services as an independent programme and activity in the United Nations. It also regretted the failure of CPC to fulfil its responsibility to review old mandates and recommend priorities so that limited and valuable resources could be allocated accordingly.

80. Mr. HANSON (Canada), speaking also on behalf of the delegations of Australia and New Zealand, said that the three delegations had been troubled by the deficiencies of recent medium-term plans and plan revisions. Such plans were valuable to the extent that they translated legislative mandates into concrete goals and objectives to be achieved during the period of the plan. Equally disturbing was the inability of the General Assembly to agree on the most recent proposed revisions to the current medium-term plan.

81. The three delegations had therefore welcomed General Assembly decision 50/452, which authorized the Secretary-General to begin preparation of the next medium-term plan on the basis of the new format which he had proposed at the forty-ninth session. The advantages of the new format included stronger links and greater congruence between the medium-term plan, the programme budget and the organization structure of the Secretariat. More importantly, it provided for clearer and more precise statements of programme objectives in order to establish benchmarks for the objective evaluation of programme implementation.

82. The three delegations particularly welcomed the Secretary-General's Perspective, which presented a clear vision of the major trends and persistent problems to be faced by the Organization in the medium term. It also presented the broad priority areas of the Organization's mandated programme activities and recognized the need for continuing change and reform to enable the Organization to meet the challenges which lay before it.

83. It was clear that, in preparing the Perspective, the Secretary-General had been fully conscious of the fact that the Organization was passing through a unique phase in its history. In response to the approaching new century and new millennium, the Perspective set a new standard of excellence in General Assembly documents. It presented a thoughtful analysis of major global trends and problems, each of which had both positive and negative aspects. It offered, moreover, an integrated view of the world in which the Organization would have to carry out its mandates and of the way in which those mandates would have to be approached. It thus provided much food for thought and merited careful study in the capital of every Member State.

84. It was unfortunate that CPC had been unable to reach agreement on the content of the Perspective and consequently had been unable to consider the document, as submitted, as an integral part of the medium-term plan.

85. The three delegations' appreciation of the Perspective, regrettably, could not be extended to the Note, which was neither shorter nor more concise than the Perspective and which, moreover, lacked the integrating analytical framework that made the Perspective a true perspective. Without such an integrating vision, the Note was a mere note. It contained much language that had been imported from working documents which were still being negotiated in other forums. As it was presented, there was a risk that its consideration by the Fifth Committee could prejudice negotiations which were still under way elsewhere. Moreover, as far as persistent problems, emerging trends, challenges, the role of the Organization, the directions to be pursued and priorities were concerned, the Note contained little of substance which was not far better presented in the Perspective.

86. He hoped that the Committee would be able to resolve any remaining ambiguity with regard to the endorsement of the new format for the medium-term plan and that the difficulties which two years earlier had prevented the approval of the proposed revisions to the current plan would not persist. The medium-term plan was not a legislative mandate in itself, but it could be a powerful tool for Member States and the Secretary-General alike for the planning, programming, budgeting, control and evaluation of the implementation of legislative mandates.

87. Mr. MIRMOHAMMAD (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that his delegation associated itself with the statements made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the Non-Aligned Movement. His delegation supported the programmatic functions of CPC, which he believed should be strengthened. The conclusions and recommendations of CPC were a good basis for achieving consensus. The Perspective submitted by the Secretary-General could not be part of the medium-term plan, but the Note could provide a good basis for further deliberations and, once it had been agreed upon, could form an integral part of the medium-term plan.

88. His delegation believed that disarmament should be treated as a separate and distinct programme; that decolonization continued to be an issue of vital importance for the United Nations; and that all aspects of human rights should be addressed in a balanced manner. In that connection, his delegation would like to see a separate subprogramme under programme 19 (Human rights) dedicated to the right to development.

89. With regard to the treatment of human rights in peacekeeping operations, he wished to reiterate that such activities did not constitute a dimension of peacekeeping operations by way of generalization. Accordingly, such a generalization was unacceptable to his delegation. As for the priorities proposed in the Note, his delegation believed that disarmament in all its aspects, particularly nuclear disarmament, should be treated as a priority. It was not convinced that humanitarian assistance should be a priority.

90. With regard to the outline of the programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999, his delegation endorsed the recommendation in the report of the Advisory Committee (A/49/958) on the need to indicate the relationship between the programme framework and the outline of the budget. That exercise should be considered in the context of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 41/213, which emphasized the intergovernmental consultation process.

91. Mr. Sengwe (Zimbabwe) resumed the Chair.

92. Ms. PEÑA (Mexico) asked whether the relevant documentation on programme 9 (Trade and development) and programme 11 (Human settlements) would be available in time for the Committee to consider them under its proposed programme of work. Her delegation recalled that the Secretariat had undertaken to submit revised versions of programmes 9 and 11 to the General Assembly as requested by CPC.

93. Mr. TAKASU (Controller), making some preliminary comments on agenda item 114, said that a number of delegations had voiced strong criticism of and scepticism about the medium-term plan. Nevertheless, there seemed to be a consensus that the Organization should continue to formulate medium-term plans as a framework for the budget. As a result of past criticisms, the Secretariat had elaborated a new system of medium-term planning with a format based on the structure of the Organization rather than on programme areas. The new system violated a number of current programme planning regulations, thus eliciting criticism that there was no relationship between the medium-term plan and the budget and the performance of the Secretariat. The new format currently before the Fifth Committee was based on the prototype contained in document A/49/301, which had subsequently been endorsed by CPC and the Advisory Committee. Under the new format, programmes corresponded to major departments and offices, and subprogrammes corresponded to organization units within departments and offices.

94. There also seemed to be a consensus that the first part of the medium-term plan should provide a general overview of the challenges and opportunities facing the United Nations. The overview should have a visionary quality and therefore depart from the actual language of General Assembly resolutions. In that respect the Secretary-General had faithfully responded to the wishes of Member States. However, the second part of the plan should adhere very closely to specific legislative mandates.

95. With regard to the intergovernmental review of the medium-term plan, he explained that a list of programmes had been prepared showing to what extent each programme had been reviewed, if at all. The intention of ensuring the full involvement of intergovernmental bodies had been respected, but for a number of reasons certain programmes had not been reviewed. For example, in some cases, there was no specialized intergovernmental body to oversee a particular programme.

96. With reference to the specific queries raised in connection with programmes 9 and 11, he assured the Committee that those programmes had been formulated by the Secretariat, submitted to CPC, and would shortly be made available to the Fifth Committee for consideration.

97. On the issue of programme structure, he reminded the Committee that the General Assembly had authorized the Secretary-General to proceed with the preparation of the medium-term plan on the basis of the recommendations of CPC and the Advisory Committee, both of which had welcomed and endorsed the prototype new format. Many delegations had proposed that certain topics should be treated as separate programmes; that was indeed the prerogative of Member States. The view had also been expressed that, as a result of the new structure, certain programmes had been abolished. In fact, only one programme - that dealing with apartheid - had actually been eliminated following a decision by the General Assembly.

98. Some delegations had expressed dissatisfaction that the Secretary-General had failed to respond to General Assembly decisions by not according priority to certain programmes. The Secretary-General had, in fact, proposed six broad priority areas for the consideration of the General Assembly, as indicated in paragraph 61 of the Note (A/51/6 (Note)), but ultimately it was for the Member States to set the Organization's priorities. Other delegations had criticized the Secretary-General for failing to indicate priorities among subprogrammes, as stipulated by programme planning resolutions. However, the new programme planning structure made it difficult to establish clear-cut priorities because it differed markedly from the old area-based format.

99. Some delegations had alleged that the new system of medium-term planning was not linked to the programme budget. He requested delegations to refrain from commenting on that aspect of the process until they had seen the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999, based on the medium-term plan. The Secretariat could not allocate resources until Member States had had an opportunity to set their priorities.

100. While it was true that many programmes did not provide specific or quantifiable performance indicators that made it possible to evaluate the Secretariat's performance, it was important to bear in mind that the medium-term plan and the programme budget of the United Nations differed radically from the budgetary objectives of private corporations or even national governments. Many United Nations activities, such as peace and security or economic analysis, simply did not lend themselves to the formulation of clear-cut performance indicators. It was important to bear in mind the characteristics, diversity and complexity of the Organization's work. In addition, Member States should remember that the regular budget was used merely to maintain the Organization's permanent structure, not to support non-operational activities.

101. Ms. INCERA (Costa Rica), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and supported by Ms. BUERGO RODRIGUEZ (Cuba), said that, since the subprogramme priorities requested had still not been received from the Secretariat, it would be difficult to discuss the matter under the proposed programme of work.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.

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UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FIFTY-FIRST SESSION

Official Records

FIFTH COMMITTEE
19th meeting
held on
Monday, 4 November 1996
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 19th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. SENGWE (Zimbabwe)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 114: PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued) (A/51/6 and A/51/16 (Parts I and II))

Proposed medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001 (continued)

Programme 1. Political affairs

1. Mr. KELLY (Ireland), speaking on behalf of the European Union and of Cyprus, Hungary, Latvia, Romania and Slovakia, said that the proposed medium-term plan must be viewed as a whole and that all of its components must reflect the views of all Member States in a balanced fashion. He fully supported the structure of the proposed plan, which had been prepared in accordance with the recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) and of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) and with General Assembly decision 50/452.

2. Programme 1 was a high priority for the European Union, since it covered activities which were central to the Organization's role under the Charter. With regard to subprogramme 1.3, a number of legislative mandates for the subprogramme - including General Assembly resolutions 2992 (XXVII), 42/45, 50/76 and the resolutions providing for the establishment of regional disarmament centres - should be subjected to intergovernmental review in order to determine their continuing relevance. Apart from those considerations, the European Union supported the adoption of programme 1 as drafted by the Secretary-General.

3. Mr. OVIA (Papua New Guinea) supported the statements made by the representatives of Costa Rica, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and Colombia, on behalf the Non-Aligned Movement. He did not agree that the activities of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples should be included under subprogramme 1.6; instead, they should constitute a separate subprogramme 1.8, entitled "Decolonization". On behalf of the Special Committee, his delegation had previously proposed language for the new subprogramme in a letter addressed to the Chairman of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) (A/C.5/51/10, appendix). Although his delegation supported the current efforts to streamline the Organization's operations, those reforms should not affect the substantive work of ongoing programmes, such as that of the Special Committee on decolonization. Pursuant to its resolution 46/181 on the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, the General Assembly must ensure that the Special Committee had the funds it needed to achieve the full implementation, for the 17 remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories, of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

4. Mr. GUTTERØD (Norway) said that he welcomed the reorganization of the Secretariat to adapt the departmental units to the nature and structure of the various programmes. Moreover, he supported the "framework for coordination"

whereby the Departments of Political Affairs, Peacekeeping Operations and Humanitarian Affairs took an integrated approach to the planning and conduct of peacekeeping operations. That mechanism should be further developed into a system-wide network for policy development and programme coordination.

5. With respect to subprogramme 1.2, the Department of Political Affairs should rationalize the compilation of background material, inter alia through coordination with other departments and via the Internet. Similar considerations applied to the Centre for Disarmament Affairs (subprogramme 1.3), which had the potential to build its expertise to a level of competence that could attract the interest of organizations outside the United Nations system, inter alia in the field of post-disarmament problems. With respect to subprogramme 1.5, the Security Council could not carry out its urgent tasks without the high-quality, effective and continuous services of its support staff; Member States must be prepared to pay the price for those services. Lastly, concerning subprogramme 1.6, the General Assembly should adopt resolutions only on issues which were truly relevant to the international community and which were within the competence of the Organization as a whole. The Secretary-General's efforts to simplify ways and means of reporting on General Assembly decisions should be supported.

6. Ms. PEÑA (Mexico) supported the proposal regarding the inclusion of a separate programme on disarmament in the proposed medium-term plan. The text of subprogramme 1.3, as currently drafted, was not sufficiently balanced in terms of its treatment of conventional versus nuclear disarmament. She hoped that the Committee would reach consensus on new language in informal consultations. She had no objection to the proposal regarding the inclusion of a separate subprogramme on decolonization.

7. Mr. IRAGORRI (Colombia), speaking on behalf of the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement, said that disarmament should be given due priority in the proposed medium-term plan. The Secretary-General's draft did not fully reflect the relevant mandates and resolutions adopted by the General Assembly. Disarmament should be dealt with in a separate programme, apart from programme 1, and should include, as its highest priority, further efforts to eliminate nuclear weapons through negotiations aimed at progressive nuclear disarmament within a specific time-frame, as well as measures to eliminate chemical, biological and other weapons of mass destruction. The programme should also reflect the urgent need to restrict the overproduction, development and stockpiling of conventional weapons through global and regional agreements. In that connection, he was concerned about the Secretariat's view of disarmament as an instrument of preventive diplomacy and peace-building, since that approach could draw attention away from the implementation of existing agreements.

8. The countries of the Non-Aligned Movement fully supported the proposal detailed in the letter dated 15 October 1996 from the Permanent Representative of Papua New Guinea addressed to the Chairman of the Fourth Committee (A/C.5/51/10, appendix) that decolonization should constitute a separate subprogramme 1.8.

9. Mr. ATIYANTO (Indonesia) agreed with the representative of Colombia that subprogramme 1.3 on disarmament should become a separate programme under the proposed medium-term plan.

10. Mr. FATTAH (Egypt) endorsed the position of the Colombian delegation. He had reservations about some of the statements made in subprogramme 1.7 on the question of Palestine, which failed to reflect the real situation in that regard, and he trusted that appropriate amendments would be introduced.

11. Mr. GOKHALE (India) supported the remarks made by the representative of Colombia on subprogramme 1.3. With respect to the other subprogrammes, a number of amendments had been agreed upon during the meetings of CPC, and his delegation would participate in informal consultations aimed at formalizing those areas of agreement.

12. Ms. BUERGO RODRÍGUEZ (Cuba) recalled that, at its fiftieth session, the General Assembly had decided to authorize the Secretary-General to begin preparation of the new medium-term plan, but had not taken any decision regarding the new format and structure of that plan; the Fifth Committee must take an explicit decision on the matter. She shared the Colombian delegation's position on subprogrammes 1.3 and 1.6. Programme 1, as currently drafted, did not reflect the interests of all Member States in a balanced manner. In particular, disarmament, decolonization and the question of Palestine were not given due importance in the draft. Subprogramme 1.3 placed too much emphasis on conventional weapons, minimizing the importance of nuclear disarmament and making no reference at all to weapons of mass destruction. She agreed with the Colombian delegation that disarmament should be a separate programme under the proposed medium-term plan.

13. Her delegation supported the proposal of Papua New Guinea that decolonization should constitute a separate subprogramme. As the representative of India had noted, the proposals and amendments put forward in the wide-ranging debates in CPC could serve as a useful basis for the Fifth Committee's deliberations.

14. Mr. ZHANG Wanhai (China) supported the statements made by the representatives of Papua New Guinea and Colombia. He hoped that the General Assembly would reach consensus, at its current session, on the many sensitive issues, such as preventive diplomacy and rapid-response forces, which had not been agreed upon in CPC. He asked whether the Committee secretariat could brief the Fifth Committee on the deliberations of the other Main Committees concerning elements of programme 1.

15. Mr. SULAIMAN (Syrian Arab Republic) supported the statements made by the Colombian and Indonesian delegations. With respect to subprogramme 1.3, he did not share the optimism expressed in the draft regarding the progress made in terms of disarmament, since nuclear weapons continued to threaten international peace and security. Despite the tradition of including disarmament as a subprogramme under the programme on political affairs, the issue was important enough to become a separate programme. Moreover, subprogramme 1.7 seemed to underestimate the importance of the still-unresolved question of Palestine,

which had been a matter of concern to the Organization for 50 years. His delegation would submit specific proposals in that regard at a later stage.

16. Mr. TAKASU (Controller) said, with regard to the review of programmes by intergovernmental bodies, that efforts had been made to seek the views of relevant bodies, but that many programmes did not have a specialized reviewing body. Information was being circulated in an informal paper. In addition, document A/C.5/51/10 contained a letter from the Chairman of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) addressed to the Chairman of the Fifth Committee, transmitting the views of several delegations, as well as the proposal by Papua New Guinea that decolonization should constitute a new subprogramme 1.8. There had, however, been no agreement within the Fourth Committee on programme 1.

17. Mr. ATIYANTO (Indonesia) said that further clarification was needed. His delegation had already raised the issue in the First Committee, and had requested that its views should be circulated as an official document.

18. Mr. ELMONTASER (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) agreed, with respect to subprogramme 1.3, that disarmament should, in view of its importance, constitute a separate programme. He supported the views of Egypt and the Syrian Arab Republic on subprogramme 1.7. The United Nations should give more importance to efforts to promote a just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine.

19. Mr. TAKASU (Controller) said that the Chairman of the First Committee had written to the Chairman of the Fifth Committee transmitting the views of a number of delegations, including those of Indonesia.

Programme 2. Peacekeeping operations

20. Mr. IRAGORRI (Colombia), speaking on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, noted the important work of CPC in reaching agreement on programme 2. The Non-Aligned Movement supported the recommendations contained in paragraph 53 of the report of CPC (A/51/16 (Part II)).

21. Mr. KELLY (Ireland), speaking on behalf of the European Union and of Cyprus, Hungary, Latvia, Romania and Slovakia, said that peacekeeping activities were a priority from a programmatic viewpoint. It was necessary to maintain and strengthen the Organization's capacity to plan, mount and operate new and existing peacekeeping missions. The European Union supported the proposed programme of work of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, as outlined in programme 2. However, the summation of activities in paragraph 2.6 should make more explicit reference to the need to develop a capacity to respond quickly to crises. The European Union welcomed the proposal for the development of a rapidly deployable headquarters capability, based in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. The need for a rapid reaction capacity should be clearly identified as an objective under subprogramme 4.

22. With regard to subprogramme 2.3, greater attention could have been devoted to strengthening the Organization's capacity to provide effective support in the start-up and expansion phases of peacekeeping missions. In that regard, the European Union had supported the establishment of the United Nations Logistics

Base at Brindisi and it placed emphasis on the early formulation of a comprehensive policy of asset management and inventory control.

23. Ms. PEÑA (Mexico) said that her delegation had no objection to the conclusions and recommendations of CPC contained in paragraph 53 of its report (A/51/16 (Part II)).

24. Mr. GUTTERØD (Norway) said that peace-building and peacekeeping activities were a cornerstone of the Organization's responsibilities. A point of serious concern was that budgetary constraints made it difficult for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to respond adequately to new challenges. The Secretary-General must be provided with the necessary resources to carry out existing mandates and to meet the backstopping requirements of the liquidation of peacekeeping operations.

25. With regard to subprogramme 2.1, one significant challenge was to strengthen professional capacity; in that connection he welcomed the efforts to develop training, manuals, guidelines and procedures, and the use of evaluation as a means of increasing efficiency. Accordingly, he was concerned that the Lessons Learned Unit was totally at the mercy of voluntary contributions. He welcomed the steps taken to strengthen coordination with other Secretariat units; that coordination should be extended to other United Nations bodies such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) so as to assure a global approach including preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance and reconstruction.

26. With respect to subprogramme 2.2, the amount of resources allocated should adequately reflect the mandate. The preparation and updating of standard procedures for operations was important in improving efficiency.

27. Regarding subprogramme 2.3, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations was governed by relatively old-fashioned administrative rules and regulations, for example, with regard to the authorization of costs. It was important to consider whether administrative procedures could be simplified, as had happened in the case of the regulations on the reimbursement of contingent-owned equipment. The handling of outstanding reimbursement claims should be expedited.

28. With regard to subprogramme 2.4, there was an obvious need to strengthen the planning of operations. The multifunctional nature of operations, where peacekeeping must fit into a broader context of preventive diplomacy, humanitarian assistance and reconstruction, made planning particularly challenging. The planned new rapidly deployable headquarters team was important in that regard.

29. Resource needs at Headquarters should be funded through the regular budget as a reflection of the priority that the international community attached to peacekeeping activities.

30. Mr. SIAL (Pakistan) asked when the information, including detailed financial implications, would be provided on the use of loaned officers. A

report was to have been issued by September 1996. His delegation emphasized the importance of reimbursing States which participated in peacekeeping operations. Pakistan, which was the largest troop contributor, was currently owed $70 million.

31. Mr. JONAH (Sierra Leone) also asked when the report on loaned officers would be issued.

32. Mr. TAKASU (Controller) said that the use of loaned staff was a major issue, not confined to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, and the Secretary-General had decided that it should be dealt with in a comprehensive report. It was, in fact, primarily a personnel policy issue which had both programmatic and financial implications, and affected the character of the Secretariat itself. The report in question was being finalized, but it should be understood that the issue was very complex. It would perhaps be preferable for the Secretariat to provide data on the situation in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, and later issue a full report dealing with the broader policy issues.

33. Mr. JONAH (Sierra Leone) said that he was well aware that loaned officers were widely used throughout the Secretariat. It appeared that the situation had reached outrageous proportions; for example, some 83 per cent of the staff of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations were on loan. The issue could not wait until a full report could be prepared. The use of such staff meant that Governments with pet projects could fund them by providing loaned personnel; that was an unacceptable state of affairs.

34. Mr. ODAGA-JALOMAYO (Uganda) said that his delegation shared the concern over the use of loaned personnel. The issue was not new, and a full report had long been promised. It was surprising that the Committee was now being told that the Secretariat needed more time. He wished to know under which items the report would be issued, and what the current situation was.

35. Ms. SANTIPITAKS (Thailand) agreed with previous speakers that the issue of loaned officers was of vital concern and that there was a need for the report to be expedited. She supported the views of the representative of Pakistan regarding reimbursement to troop-contributing countries.

36. Mr. GOKHALE (India) said that the request for a report on loaned officers had first been made at the forty-eighth session. It was therefore hard to believe that the Secretariat was still gathering information.

37. Mr. TAKASU (Controller) said that the practice had begun with the loaning of military officers. The Secretary-General had determined, however, that it was not simply an issue affecting peacekeeping operations, but that it constituted a broad issue of personnel policy involving many departments of the Organization. From the departmental viewpoint, that perspective was generally not a primary concern. In the circumstances, it was difficult to develop a common position; as the Committee was aware, the views of Member States differed. The report would embrace several agenda items, principally human resources management, but also the administrative aspects of peacekeeping operations and the programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997, as well as the

financing of the international criminal tribunals. Data could be provided relatively quickly, but the policy paper would require more time.

38. Mr. ODAGA-JALOMAYO (Uganda) agreed that it was a policy issue. The international character of the United Nations must not be undermined because of the financial crisis, and every effort must be made to address the issue. He asked exactly when the comprehensive report was expected to be issued.

39. Mr. JONAH (Sierra Leone) said that the issue was a serious one in that some Governments were selecting certain United Nations programmes for support, while neglecting others. In many instances, the Secretary-General was not aware of the number of loaned officers or of the extent to which they were used. Governments should not be allowed to undermine the United Nations by resorting to practices such as those described. He therefore asked whether the programme could be placed on hold pending clarification.

40. Mr. SIAL (Pakistan) said that the issue was not one of human resources management. The Secretariat was currently considering an offer made by a number of Member States for the establishment of a rapidly deployable headquarters team at no cost to the Organization. Further information was needed in order to enable the Committee to take a decision. He thanked the representative of India for reminding the Committee that information had been requested as early as the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly and pointed out that, at the resumed fiftieth session, the Secretary-General had been asked to provide such information by 1 September 1996 (resolution 50/221 B (para. 13)).

41. The CHAIRMAN said that the problem was a systemic one that had to be addressed. He invited the Controller to provide further clarification on the issues that had been raised.

42. Mr. TAKASU (Controller) said that the first question that had been raised concerned programme 2 and the question of loaned officers. That was a matter for the Committee to decide, but he suggested that it would be unfair to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to delay approval of the programme because of that issue.

43. The second question concerned the timing of the report that was expected from the Secretary-General. His Office had been asked to coordinate the report and the timing would depend on the work programme, bearing in mind that his Office consisted only of himself and one assistant. He hoped that the report would be ready in time to enable the Fifth Committee to take a decision at the current session, but it was difficult to give any precise indication of the date when it would be issued, particularly since it was necessary to coordinate with a number of Secretariat departments.

44. The CHAIRMAN, referring to the proposal by the representative of Sierra Leone that the Committee should not proceed with programme 2 until it had received information concerning the position with regard to loaned officers, said he took it that the Committee wished to keep programme 2 on hold until further clarification had been provided by the Secretariat.

Programme 3. Outer space affairs

45. Ms. PEÑA (Mexico) said that her delegation endorsed the conclusions and recommendations of CPC contained in paragraph 58 of its report (A/51/16 (Part II)), and would like those conclusions and recommendations to be incorporated in the draft resolution.

46. Mr. KELLY (Ireland), speaking on behalf of the European Union and of Cyprus, Hungary, Latvia, Romania and Slovakia, said that the European Union continued to support the work performed by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space within the framework of the United Nations system. If that Committee was to remain a focus for United Nations activities relating to the peaceful exploration of outer space, it must engage in a process of reform, including the streamlining of its organization of work so as to reduce significantly the duration of its sessions. The European Union therefore encouraged the Committee to continue with its reform efforts, which were necessary to ensure the continued relevance of the programme.

47. Mr. GOKHALE (India) supported the programme submitted by the Secretary-General, as amended by CPC.

48. Mr. JAREMCZUK (Poland) said that his delegation endorsed the statements made by the representative of Ireland concerning programmes 1, 2 and 3.

49. Ms. BUERGO RODRÍGUEZ (Cuba) said that her delegation fully supported the proposal on programme 3 as submitted by the Secretariat, together with the conclusions and recommendations of CPC.

Programme 4. Legal affairs

50. Ms. PEÑA (Mexico) said that her delegation endorsed the conclusions and recommendations of CPC contained in paragraph 63 of its report (A/51/16 (Part II)).

51. Ms. BUERGO RODRÍGUEZ (Cuba) said that, in general, her delegation supported the programme but recalled that the Chairman had written to the Chairman of the Sixth Committee requesting additional information which was still awaited. She suggested that, before concluding its consideration of programme 4, the Committee should await the input from the Sixth Committee, particularly since the information had been specifically requested by the Fifth Committee.

52. Mr. KELLY (Ireland), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the European Union would have comments to make on programme 4 but was not in a position to do so at the present stage because the Sixth Committee had been engaged in other matters and had only begun consideration of the matters referred to it by the Fifth Committee the previous week. He might, however, be in a position to make a statement on the matter, taking into account the input from the Sixth Committee, at the following meeting that afternoon.

53. The CHAIRMAN said that two suggestions had been made: one by the representative of Cuba to the effect that the Committee should await the input from the Sixth Committee, and the other by the representative of Ireland that the issue might be taken up that same afternoon.

54. Mr. HANSON (Canada) agreed with the representative of Cuba. As a general rule, the Committee should not take a decision on any matter on which it was still awaiting a reply from the Chairman of another Main Committee.

55. Mr. KELLY (Ireland) said that that afternoon was the earliest time by which the input from the Sixth Committee might be received. He could therefore support the statements by the representatives of Cuba and Canada to the effect that the Committee should await receipt of the input that was expected from the Chairman of the Sixth Committee.

56. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee seemed to be in agreement that it should await the input from the Chairman of the Sixth Committee before proceeding with its consideration of programme 4. He pointed out that the same problem would arise with programmes 5 to 8 because input relating to those programmes from the Second Committee was not yet available.

57. Ms. PEÑA (Mexico) recalled that, some years previously, concern had been expressed by delegations about the timing of consideration of input from other committees and the taking of the related decisions. Rather than leave the programmes open pending receipt of information from other committees, her delegation would be in favour of continuing discussion on the matter and then, as on the earlier occasion, taking a decision when the letters from the chairmen of the other committees were available. On that occasion, such decisions had been taken all together at the end of the general debate. If that solution were adopted at the current session, it would have the advantage of fully utilizing the conference services available to the Committee.

58. Mr. ODAGA-JALOMAYO (Uganda) supported the suggestion made by the representative of Mexico.

59. Ms. BUERGO RODRÍGUEZ (Cuba) said that her delegation had no difficulty in proceeding on the basis suggested by the representative of Mexico. Her intention had not been to hold up work on the consideration of the programmes. She asked the Chairman whether he would contact the Chairman of the Sixth Committee and ask him to obtain the input from that Committee as soon as possible in order to expedite the work of the Fifth Committee.

60. Mr. ODAGA-JALOMAYO (Uganda) agreed with the representative of Cuba and suggested that the Chairman should contact the Chairmen of all the other Main Committees from which comments were expected and ask them to submit their comments as soon as possible.

61. Mr. REPASCH (United States of America) supported the suggestion made by the representative of Uganda. His own delegation had no problem with keeping the programmes open but would like to have some indication of a timetable for the Committee's consideration of the item so that the members of the Committee would

have an idea of when it would likely be in a position to conclude its discussion.

62. The CHAIRMAN said that he would report back to the Committee on the likely timing after he had approached the Chairmen of the other Main Committees concerned..

Programme 5. Policy coordination and sustainable development

63. Ms. PEÑA (Mexico) said that her delegation agreed with the conclusions and recommendations contained in paragraph 74 of the report of CPC (A/51/16 (Part II)).

64. Ms. BUERGO RODRÍGUEZ (Cuba) said that her delegation would reserve its comments on programme 5 until the Second Committee had completed its consideration of the item.

65. Mr. KELLY (Ireland), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that he wished to make some preliminary remarks covering all the programmes in the economic and social field. The European Union believed that the medium-term plan should reflect the political parameters established at the recent global conferences, promote their integrated implementation and assess the organizational needs, including the administrative and budgetary resources required to facilitate the implementation of the commitments undertaken. In that context, the European Union noted that, in its resolution 50/227, the General Assembly had agreed that the role and working methods of CPC should be reviewed with a view to finding ways of improving programme coordination functions (Annex I, para. 73). The European Union attached importance to the convening of a special session of the General Assembly for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of Agenda 21, including the future role of the Commission on Sustainable Development. In that respect, it understood that the medium-term plan might need to be revised in line with the decisions taken at the special session.

66. Commenting generally on the organization of the Secretariat, he said that the role of the United Nations in the field of development activities would be substantially strengthened if the three Secretariat departments with responsibilities in the area were to be merged under the authority of a single Under-Secretary-General responsible for policy formulation and coordination in the fields of sustainable development and economic cooperation. Coherence and coordination of operational activities should also be appropriately enhanced through the strengthening of the relevant Secretariat function. The European Union had put forward proposals to that effect within the framework of the negotiations taking place in the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly for the Mid-term Review of the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. Acceptance of those proposals would, of necessity, require the rewriting of the programmes to which he had referred.

67. Turning specifically to programme 5, he noted that it made only passing reference to the central coordinating function of the Economic and Social Council and little to the key role of the Administrative Committee on

Coordination. Even though it had been drafted before the adoption of General Assembly resolution 50/227, the omission of any more detailed reference to those bodies was surprising. Subprogramme 5.1 should therefore be revised accordingly.

68. With regard to subprogramme 5.2, the European Union encouraged the Division for the Advancement of Women and other parts of the United Nations system to continue to develop the analytic and conceptual basis for system-wide mainstreaming of a gender perspective.

69. Subprogramme 5.4 addressed the purpose and functioning of the Division for Sustainable Development, which had a key role to play in the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and to the other major conferences on development issues. More emphasis should have been placed, however, on the people-centred nature of sustainable development. The Division for Sustainable Development should complement the work of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in monitoring developments related to the implementation of the intergovernmental conventions on the various aspects of sustainable development which had been agreed to in recent years. The European Union also believed that the objective of ensuring support for the Commission on Sustainable Development should be clearly stated in the medium-term plan.

70. Mr. ODAGA-JALOMAYO (Uganda) noted that the representative of Ireland had just put forward specific proposals which would entail the rewriting of several programmes. While he would await the formal presentation of the proposals in writing, as a preliminary reaction he would note that the reason why the High-level Open-ended Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System had been appointed was precisely to examine that type of proposal. Moreover, given the large number of pending issues, the Committee was hardly in a position at present to discuss the proposal.

71. Mr. KELLY (Ireland) said that he wished to reassure the representative of Uganda that it was not the intention of the European Union to pursue the proposal to which he had just referred in the context of the medium-term plan, although, if accepted, it would entail some revisions to programmes 5, 7 and 8. The proposals had been put forward in the negotiations on the New Agenda for Development and the European Union was prepared to pursue them in such other forums as it considered appropriate.

72. The CHAIRMAN said that the general debate on programme 5 would continue when the Second Committee had completed its consideration of the item and reported its conclusions to the Fifth Committee.

Programme 6. Africa: New Agenda for Development

73. Ms. PEÑA (Mexico) said that her delegation supported the conclusions and recommendations of CPC on programme 6.

74. Mr. CHUINKAM (Cameroon), supported by Mr. ATIYANTO (Indonesia), noted that the mid-term review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF) had recently been completed and its results

should have been taken into account in the formulation of the programme under consideration.

75. Mr. TOYA (Japan) said that his delegation fully supported the conclusions and recommendations of CPC on programme 6. However, it shared the view of the representative of Cameroon that the results of the mid-term review of UN-NADAF should be reflected in the proposed medium-term plan.

76. Mr. KELLY (Ireland), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the European Union fully supported the objectives of UN-NADAF. For the remainder of the period of the New Agenda, emphasis should be placed on implementation of the various programmes and initiatives, including the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa. The European Union had some concerns, however, about the possible duplication of activities in subprogrammes 6.1 and 6.3, both of which were concerned with the mobilization of international support for, and awareness of, the critical economic situation of Africa.

77. Mr. ODAGA-JALOMAYO (Uganda) agreed with the suggestion made by the representative of Cameroon that the results of the mid-term review of UN-NADAF should be reflected in the proposed medium-term plan. Indeed, the Committee's discussions on the programme could benefit from the views expressed in the Second Committee.

78. Mr. GOKHALE (India) said that his delegation supported the conclusions and recommendations of CPC on programme 6, which should also incorporate elements of the mid-term review of UN-NADAF.

79. Mr. HANSON (Canada) said that one result of the incorporation of the mid-term review of UN-NADAF into the programme would be the streamlining of the implementation of the New Agenda. The cause of African development would not be served by the adoption of competing strategies. The System-wide Special Initiative on Africa, for example, should complement the New Agenda, which continued to provide a sound basis for pursuing the objectives of African development in the years ahead.

80. Mr. ALOM (Bangladesh) said that his delegation supported the programme under consideration, as well as the conclusions and recommendations of CPC thereon. He agreed with those delegations which had called for both the views of the Second Committee and the conclusions of the mid-term review of UN-NADAF to be reflected in the proposed programme.

81. Ms. BUERGO RODRÍGUEZ (Cuba) said that there appeared to be general agreement within the Committee that its consideration of the various programmes of the proposed medium-term plan would be greatly facilitated by inputs from the other Main Committees.

82. Mr. IRAGORRI (Colombia) said that there was a clear consensus on the need for the United Nations to maintain its commitment to the development of Africa. His delegation therefore supported the programme under consideration and the conclusions and recommendations contained in paragraph 81 of the report of CPC (A/51/16 (Part II)). It also agreed with the representative of Cameroon that

the programme should take into account the results of the mid-term review of UN-NADAF.

83. Mr. FAGUNDES (Brazil) also supported the suggestion made by the representative of Cameroon, given the importance of the New Agenda to African development. His delegation unreservedly supported the conclusions and recommendations of CPC.

84. Mrs. SEALY MONTEITH (Jamaica) said that her delegation fully supported the New Agenda for the Development of Africa and agreed that the results of the mid-term review thereof should be taken into account in the formulation of the programme under consideration.

85. Mr. ELMONTASER (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that programme 6 was of vital importance to the African continent. His delegation reserved the right to speak again on the item after the report of the Second Committee had been received.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.